



String Chamber Music of the Classical German School, 1840-1900: A Scholarly Investigation through Reconstructive Performance

EVIDENCE AND INCENTIVE: PERSPECTIVES UPON JOSEPH JOACHIM'S PERFORMING PRACTICES AND THE VIABILITY OF STYLISTIC REVIVAL

David Milsom, June 2007 (revised May 2015)

Andreas Moser's biography of Joachim concludes by evoking an image of the violinist's evergreen health and vitality. On the occasion of Joachim's sixty years' jubilee concert given at the Philharmonic Hall, Berlin on April 22, 1899, Moser observed:

'Standing there in unimpaired health and strength he was like a landmark of the past, unshaken by storms, serving the present and the future. And as in his early manhood, through holding firmly to his ideals, he gained a foremost place among his contemporaries, most of whom are now in their graves, he now stands forth a giant oak in full leaf, giving testimony of the inner strength that lives at the heart of the tree.

Long may it stand and flourish!'¹

This affectionate portrait by Joachim's colleague and pupil asserts not only Joachim's vigour late in life, but predicts a continued relevance of his manner of violin playing. Moser suggests:

'Just as his performances in the concert-room have become a model for every executive artist with high ideals, so in the last half century he has placed the stamp of individuality upon the art of violin playing. Through his numerous pupils, who will carry his teaching well into the next century, he has provided for the future of his art'.²

Moser continues by describing the relevance of the 'Joachim School' of playing, and the view that he founded a 'new and specific art of violin-playing'.³ He asserts the superior legitimacy of Joachim's approach by claiming, as he does in the *Violinschule*,⁴ that Joachim's authority emanates from his continuation of the ideals and practices of the Italian originators of the instrument. Thus the Berlin *Hochschule* is praised not only for its basis in Joachim's own esteem, but also for its place as the inheritor of a long and proud tradition. Moser thus claims:

¹ A, Moser, *Joseph Joachim – A Biography* (trans. L. Durham, London, 1901), 331.

² Moser, 239.

³ Moser, 240.

⁴ See J. Joachim and A. Moser, *Violinschule* (Berlin 1902-5, trans. A. Moffat), Vol. 3 p.32.

**MILSOM: String Chamber Music of the Classical German School, 1840-1900:
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‘As centuries ago multitudes of German musicians made pilgrimages to Italy in order to learn at the very cradle of instrumental music, so to-day Italian and French students flock to Berlin to learn at the German capital how their forefathers practised the art of fiddle-playing.’⁵

Moser attempts thus to grant permanence as well as legitimacy to Joachim’s legacy. Nor is this a dusty academicism, for Moser bestows upon Joachim the compliment that ‘He is the first who has played the violin, not for its own sake, but in the service of an ideal, and has lifted up his calling from the rank of mere mechanical skill to an intellectual level’.⁶

In reality, Joachim’s approach and style soon faded after his death, and the Berlin *Hochschule*, which enshrined his aesthetic and practical approach, was seen by many more progressive figures as reactionary and even technically unsound.⁷ By the 1930s, almost nothing of his style of playing survived, except perhaps in a few isolated instances. Fragments of his approach can be heard in the playing of Arnold Rosé who, as late as the 1940s perpetuated Joachim’s traits of a ‘dry’ sound and sparing vibrato,⁸ although most players by World War II spoke an aesthetic language that was, in many respects, in direct opposition to Joachim’s ideals and practices.

Moreover, this newer style of playing retains its dominance today. The most obvious traits of this twentieth-century manner of playing can be glimpsed not only in the comparatively continuous vibrato, discrete use of portamento and preponderance of sprung staccato bowstrokes, but also in more basic, even philosophical ideals of modern playing: rhythmic accuracy and fidelity to the printed score, stability of tempo, and the prizing of ensemble ‘togetherness’ and precision. All of these aspects of playing stand in stark contrast to Joachim’s approach and its continuation of performing practices described throughout the nineteenth (and even eighteenth) century.⁹ Joachim’s stylistic position became synonymous with all that was ‘old fashioned’ and even shameful, in what might be considered a ‘romanticised’ style of playing. This is powerfully drawn by studies of sound recordings that show very clearly a change in performance fashion and taste.¹⁰ Increasingly, string players turned their backs on portamento as an expressive device, and commensurately increased both the frequency and intensity of vibrato, the latter becoming not so much the ornament as it had been described by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers, as a constituent of every competent player’s basic sound. Tempo rubato, now synonymous with players of the ancien régime and just glimpsed in its waning days of popularity in early recordings and piano rolls, became a symbol of romantic

⁵ Moser, 241.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See for example C. Flesch, *The Memoirs of Carl Flesch* (trans. H. Keller, London, 1957), 34-5 and H. J. Fuller-Maitland, *Living Masters of Music – Joachim* (London, 1905), 36.

⁸ See Yfrah Neaman’s recollections in R. Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (Yale, 2004), 236-7. Rose’s continued use of a ‘pure’ tone can be heard in the 1930 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performance of Mahler’s 9th symphony (cond. Bruno Walter), in the finale solos. [HMV DB3613-3622 (2VH 7027-46); re-issued as CDEA 5005 by Dutton Laboratories].

⁹ See D. Milsom, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance 1850 – 1900* (Aldershot, 2003).

¹⁰ See R. Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style – Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance 1900-1950* (Cambridge, 1992) and D. Milsom, *Theory and Practice*.

excess, and even evidence of the inflated status of performers and their will to 'interpret' musical scores.¹¹ The twentieth century prized a more objective expressiveness, outworked more in tonal enrichment than in spontaneous employment of expressive devices. Joachim's dislike of the continuous vibrato, and the increasingly strident tone of his admonishments against its over-use (also found with fellow adherents of established stylistic ideals¹²) placed his musicianship in opposition to this newer style, whilst the abandonment of many aspects of his own performance craftsmanship would perhaps have struck him as both perplexing and inartistic.

Taken overall, the accuracy of the impression above is not a matter of debate, and a considerable amount of scholarship has shown how rapidly the way of playing associated with Joachim was rendered obsolete in the first third of the twentieth century. By the 1970s, as Robert Philip relates, Joachim's playing was treated with fascination – not, as in Moser's time, for its evocation of peerless taste and refinement; the cultivation of the highest form of art – but as a preposterous and even laughable way of playing. Thus he observes:

'Thirty years ago, a recording of Joachim playing a Brahms Hungarian Dance, if played to an audience, used to make them laugh. It was a completely unfamiliar and, from the perspective of the 1970s, ludicrous manner of playing, and it was impossible to imagine that this was the great violinist for whom Brahms wrote his Violin Concerto.¹³

In the intervening time, Joachim's playing has been rehabilitated to a great extent. The chronological advance of 'historically-informed performance', which by 1991 included performance of Brahms symphonies on period instruments,¹⁴ made Joachim's playing not merely 'old-fashioned' but 'historical': a higher status no doubt impelled by Philip's own scholarship and the publication in 1992 of his seminal *Early Recordings and Musical Style*¹⁵ – the first major study of early recordings. Since this time, CD re-issue of Joachim's recordings¹⁶ has improved knowledge of his playing, and the main thrust of this for many is his status as the oldest violinist on record. As one might listen to the distant echoes of Brahms performing his 1st Hungarian Dance at the piano,¹⁷ or the dimly-discerned filaments of sound in Gouraud's 1888 Crystal Palace recording of Handel's *Israel in Egypt*,¹⁸ so too, one might hear the dim sounds of Joachim's 1903 disks and wonder, with a child-like curiosity, at the sounds of a player born in the reign of William IV, who had worked with Spohr, Mendelssohn,

¹¹ Increasingly prescriptive attitudes of a number of influential composers such as Arnold Schonberg can be said to have effected a 'sea change' from Wagner's extreme applications of interpretative responsibility to one that circumscribed the responsibility of performers to following the instructions of the score. Conductors such as Felix Weingartner and Karl Muck perpetuated this trend in their increasingly disciplined and interpretatively restrained performances.

¹² For example, L. Auer, *Violin Playing as I Teach It* (New York, 1921), 60 and 62, and Joachim and Moser, Volume 2, 96.

¹³ Philip, *Performing Music*, 248.

¹⁴ CDC7 54286-2 (EMI).

¹⁵ See note 10.

¹⁶ OPALCD 9851.

¹⁷ British Library Sound Archive no 1CD0048883.

¹⁸ ENHS object catalogue E-2440-20.

Schumann and Brahms. Joachim scholarship is, in so many ways, well-tilled ground. Interest in his life and work has moved from the preserve of the unctuous admirer and even the grudging respect of the critic with (as in the case of Carl Flesch) a vested interest in dismantling Joachim's reputation,¹⁹ to the preserve of the dispassionate and professional historian. The comparative richness of Joachim's legacy as regards evidence makes his study an obvious starting point in the ever-deepening scholarship into late nineteenth-century performance.

There is much that can be learnt about Joachim's performing practices. As with his former pupil, Leopold Auer, we have three interrelated forms of readily-available source: a violin treatise, a body of editorial work, and of course, sound recordings.

Joachim's *Violinschule*, written in collaboration with Andreas Moser.²⁰ is a major 3-volume document enshrining his aesthetic ideals and perpetuating, into the twentieth century, many of the key tenets of established nineteenth-century stylistic taste. Joachim and Moser write at length on aspects not only of violin technique, but also of performance style. They reveal a remarkable parity with established figures of the German tradition and lengthy, verbatim quotation of Louis Spohr's *Violinschule*,²¹ and in matters as fashion-sensitive as vibrato and portamento. This suggests a conscious inheritance of performance tradition.

Joachim also promulgated his ideals by means of his editions of classical masterworks of both solo violin and chamber repertoire. Perpetuating Spohr's example (in which he concludes his *Violinschule* with editions of Rode's 7th and his own 9th concertos, complete with bowings, fingerings, vibrato signs and verbal commentaries), Joachim and Moser publish sixteen key solo violin works, with verbal prefaces. Although the written descriptions are more often of Moser's rather than Joachim's authorship, Joachim himself contributed lengthy articles on works of particular personal relevance, such as the Mendelssohn concerto, Op. 64, in which he expounds upon his experiences of learning the work with the composer.²² Taken as a whole, these sixteen masterworks reveal much concerning his bowing and fingering styles, as well as his philosophical ethos. Attention might be drawn, for example, to his edition of Viotti's 22nd concerto.²³ This work, for which Joachim had a personal fondness and for which he mounted an ultimately unsuccessful crusade to revive it in the concert repertory, is presented with not only a full complement of cadenzas at all available junctures, but also an ornamented slow movement and reference to now-outmoded bowing styles such as *fouetté*.²⁴ The ornamented slow

¹⁹ Carl Flesch was a prodigious editor and author in his own right who, as Joachim, acted as editor, author and practicing violinist. His adherence to the new 20th century aesthetic stance is clearly heard in his own playing and enshrined in his *The Art of Violin Playing* (English text, F. Martens, Vol 1, New York, 1924; Vol 2, New York 1930.

²⁰ See note 4.

²¹ L. Spohr, *Violinschule* (Vienna, 1833).

²² Joachim and Moser Vol 3, 228-231.

²³ Joachim and Moser Vol 3, 86-103. For a detailed examination of nineteenth-century editions of this concerto see C. Brown and D. Milsom, 'The Nineteenth-Century Legacy of the Viotti School: Editions of the Violin Concerto No. 22', in M. Sala (ed), *Giovanni Battista Viotti – A Composer Between the Two Revolutions* (Bologna, 2006), 157-198.

²⁴ A 'whipped' effect in which the bow is thrown with some force onto the string in the upper-half or at the point of the bow.

movement, 'following tradition',²⁵ places Joachim's edition in the context of his former mentor, Ferdinand David,²⁶ an equally prolific editor of classical solo and chamber works and with whom Joachim shared many editorial traits of style. It also hints at Joachim's attempt, at some considerable historical distance, to suggest appropriate historically-informed performance of the work, two-thirds of a century before the concept of HIP reached anything like its current form. His care to present Viotti's original notation as well as his own ornamented version of it (a practice also shared by David) displays his scholarly bearing and caution; Joachim clearly intended to act here as a torchbearer for an established tradition.

Joachim's recordings²⁷ corroborate his writings remarkably closely. Whilst he tempers his remarks in the *Violinschule* with the pragmatic acceptance that 'all rules applied to the art of music performance are not of unbending strictness',²⁸ it is surprising how much he follows his own stylistic advice. Analysis of his five recordings displays not only generalised support for his stylistic traits, as in his discrete use of vibrato, fastidious and variegated phrasing and accentuation, and use of agogic accentuation, but also a level of detailed observance of his own ideals. Thus his use of portamento is quite restrained – very much so against the comparative backdrop of many of the earliest recordings; he employs a degree of stylistic sensitivity, using the device infrequently in the Bach G minor Prelude performance, in spite of the many opportunities for it in this fantasia-like composition. Whilst Arnold Rosé, a superficially similar but rather less intellectual executor,²⁹ executes twenty-three slides in his 1928 performance of this work,³⁰ Joachim employs the device a mere four times. The device is heard more frequently in his own Romance in C (which also contains the most frequent and fundamental departures from the rhythmic text), suggesting that Joachim's veneration of Bach admitted a comparatively chaste interpretative treatment. Whilst some of the mannerisms of these recorded performances may well be accounted for by his advanced age (such as the oddly snatched and clumsy chords towards the end of the G minor Prelude, or the rather sharp C-natural reached by a pronounced portamento at bars 21-22 of the 1st Hungarian Dance), a practiced ear, able to listen beyond these worn discs and to exercise both discernment and imagination as regards their relatively dim and insubstantial sound, can detect many important stylistic characteristics. The recordings have obvious value because they provide us with a context in which to understand Joachim's written remarks. In some respects the recordings confirm the impression created on paper; in others, they reveal aspects of practices one might not have known. In this category might come the case of the manner of his agogic accents, rhythmic volatility and tempo changes as found particularly in the Romance in C. Whilst his use of agogic accentuation is well

²⁵ Joachim and Moser Vol 3, 86.

²⁶ Published as part of *Concert-Studien für die Violine* (Leipzig, Bartolff Senff, plate number 22470.22476; 1860).

²⁷ See note 16.

²⁸ Joachim and Moser, Vol2, 95.

²⁹ This was Flesch's view (Memoirs, 49-52), and is supported to a certain extent by his recordings.

Rosé's playing, as revealed in his solo recordings of c. 1909-1910 is very much within the sound-world of the old German school, with a discreet vibrato and portamento characteristic of the tradition; yet he made little difference in approach between different repertoires and his approach to expression is somewhat arbitrary in comparison to Joachim's theoretically-justified approach.

³⁰ Czech HMV matrix no ES665 (CA 48), on LAB056/057.

documented and explored in significant detail by Fuller-Maitland in his biography,³¹ the manner in which Joachim puts this into practice could not have been predicted from other sources alone. Slight as Joachim's discography is, its value cannot be underestimated.

In spite of this, there are many doubts about the evidence for Joachim's performing practices as revealed by these three strands of evidence, and a number of commentators and scholars have voiced their circumspection.

Carl Flesch was critical of the *Violinschule* and many of Joachim's editions, in which, in his view, Joachim's involvement is rather less than that of his collaborator, Andreas Moser. In spite of the fact that one might reasonably assume that both men were in agreement as regards the content of their jointly-authored outputs, Flesch attempts to break the two apart. Flesch may have felt unable to criticise Joachim vociferously in a direct manner, but he did find opportunity to belittle Moser's work.

Thus he writes:

'...in the *Violinschule* bearing his name and in the Bach sonatas he succumbed all too easily to the influence of his collaborator Andreas Moser; many of the fingerings and bowings bear the stamp of a personality theoretically well-versed, but practically inexperienced and reactionary; for Moser was really one of the weakest violinists who emerged from the Joachim school, and he hardly got a chance to acquaint himself personally with the pitfalls of playing in public'.³²

Of Joachim's editions, Flesch further remarks that...

'...at times he left too many fingerings and bowings to discretion, as in the case of the Corelli and Beethoven sonatas, which are hardly distinguishable from the original text'.³³

It must be remembered that Flesch supported a newer style and attitude to violin playing, enshrined in his own prolific output of editions and writings, which show a markedly different attitude to execution and style.³⁴ His testimony must itself thus be seen as highly suspect, although his balanced critique of Joachim's playing and the fact that even some of Joachim's supporters shared Flesch's criticism of the Berlin method of bowing (which aimed to replicate Joachim's own practice³⁵) means that his remarks must be granted at least a dispassionate hearing.

As regards Joachim's editions, Flesch's demurring might be said to originate in more than just his own self-interest and promotion and, indeed, in more than a change of attitude towards what a performance edition might contain.³⁶ Information about the content of Joachim's editions is thus rather contradictory.

³¹ Fuller-Maitland, 28.

³² Flesch, 36.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See note 19.

³⁵ Flesch, 34.

³⁶ Flesch's remarks upon Joachim's editions make curious reading from the contemporary perspective. Urtext editions, aiming to remove editorial content and ambiguity, have high status today and heavily-marked texts are often criticised for this very fact. From Flesch's perspective, a good edition was,

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In Moser's biography of Joachim, quoting in score form the opening of the Mendelssohn concerto in Joachim's edition, and opprobrious concerning Joachim's maintenance of Mendelssohn's original phrasing, he remarks that 'Joachim is not to be induced to publish editions of the pieces played by him in public'. Furthermore...

'...He has refused all publishers, saying that the artistic side of a work cannot be imparted by written signs; and that those who wish to play the works of the great masters must have sufficient taste and knowledge of violin technique to find their own bowings and fingerings.'³⁷

And yet, Moser and Joachim publish sixteen works in Volume 3 of their *Violinschule*, including concertos by Viotti, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Brahms – all of which were not only played by Joachim, but which were synonymous with his performing career!

Moser's remarks upon Ferdinand David's editions are equally perplexing. David was appointed by Mendelssohn as advisor to the young Joachim, and a comparison of many of the editions they made of the same works reveals distinct local differences and personal mannerisms (such as David's enthusiasm for slurred staccatos and avoidance of even-numbered positions, and Joachim's simpler, cleaner, but at times more complex fingering schemes³⁸). But there is also evidence of a fundamental stylistic agreement as fellow members, perhaps, of a common German aesthetic heritage. Nonetheless, Moser criticises David's editions in no uncertain terms:

'He doctored up the old masters to suit the taste of certain contemporaries, by shameless alterations, adding superfluous ornamentations, far-fetched marks of expression, and introducing cadenzas quite opposed to the character of the music, and the insinuation of a host of vulgar and exaggerated nuances, thereby robbing these works of their charm and simplicity'.³⁹

Moser does not provide examples or a clear context, which is regrettable. Certainly, David's editions of Beethoven or Spohr⁴⁰ do not seem heavily marked within the understanding of tasteful execution understood and practiced by Moser and Joachim. Whilst Viotti's 22nd concerto does admit ornamentation as previously observed, the ornamentations cannot be seen as 'superfluous' and are carefully differentiated from the original text in an attitude of editorial piety one might expect of a colleague of Mendelssohn, himself a scrupulous and scholarly editor. Certainly, if

clearly, a heavily marked and prescriptive one and his own editorial stance suggests this. The restraint of many of Joachim's editions and his desire not to lay out an overly-prescriptive framework is more familiar to the modern perspective than Flesch's viewpoint. This also displays one of the key qualifications of the parity between Joachim and Auer, the latter, also, favouring a prescriptive and detailed editorial stance.

³⁷ Moser, 295.

³⁸ Compare, for example David's Viotti 22nd concerto edition (note 26) and Joachim's edition (note 23).

³⁹ Moser, 44.

⁴⁰ For example, his edition of the Beethoven violin sonatas (Peters plate number 6531) and Spohr Op. 67 violin duos (Peters plate number 6236).

David deserves Moser's invective, so too does Moser's master, Joachim. This underlines how perplexing and unreliable contemporary comment can be but it also warns us not necessarily to take Joachim's editions at face value.

If the written materials concerning Joachim's performing practice are problematic, they are much less contentious than the value of his recordings. It is perhaps revealing that Beatrix Borchard's recent text on Joachim dismisses them in a mere quarter-page paragraph in her 670-page biography of the violinist.⁴¹ This is particularly curious given the immense volume of scholarship devoted to the analysis and evaluation of early recordings – Joachim's documents being some of the most famous and quoted examples. This said, Carl Flesch mentioned Joachim's recordings as an example of how the early processes proved incapable of conveying their author's charismatic bearing in performance; he remarks that, along with Ysaÿe and Sarasate, '...the merits of their personalities were inaccessible to mechanical reproduction'.⁴² These remarks augment the more familiar argument in qualification of the value of early recordings generically, and Joachim's recordings more specifically. The intrusive recording conditions, limited frequency response, and inability to record for longer than 4 minutes at a time are in Joachim's case added to the issues inherent in extrapolating true aspects of performance style of a 72-year-old who may or may not have been bewildered by the strangeness of the recording environment. The technology was too primitive and the artist too much past his prime to give the recordings absolute authority, and certainly not the authority we would like them to have. The recordings might thus be seen as curiosities, but serious study of them as evidence of how Joachim played (or wanted to sound) is, so the argument goes, wildly and unrealistically optimistic. Even if the playing on the discs can be said to represent Joachim's unconstrained intentions, can we seriously extrapolate from a Hungarian Dance performance how Joachim played the Brahms concerto, or from the B minor Bourée, how he played the D minor Chaconne?

As a result, the conventional thesis accepts that we know far more about Joachim than Louis Spohr or (perhaps of more interest to the popular mind) Niccolò Paganini, but still too little to be absolutely sure about any aspect of his performing practice. The existence of his sound recordings is thus rather tokenistic, and from the current perspective it is a matter of great frustration that the cheapest, crudest recording device for sale today would be infinitely more faithful to Joachim's sound than the recordings he did make. As a result, any attempt to revive Joachim's aesthetic stance must be seen at best as highly speculative and at worst as virtually impossible.

Such a view can be challenged, however. Whilst it seems unlikely that significant new evidence will be unearthed to inform our understanding of Joachim's performance style, it is possible, with caution and all due caveats, at least to attempt

⁴¹ B. Borchard, *Stimme und Geige Amelie und Joseph Joachim – Biographie und Interpretationsgeschichte* (Wien, Köln, Weimar, 2005), 55.

⁴² Flesch, 292. Interestingly, Flesch suggests that some players, including Kreisler and Heifetz, did record well, whilst Joseph Szigeti 'sounds even better canned than live' (ibid). As in the case of Caruso's singing, for example, it is tempting to assert that the 'recordability' of certain players as opposed to others explains their fame and influence (selling more records and reaching a wider audience). Had Kreisler's playing recorded less well, one wonders to what extent his playing would have had such a widespread and evident influence.

a more complete understanding of his playing. Such a re-appraisal relies upon two elements: the motivation to re-capture Joachim's performance style, and use of alternative methodology to assess evidence of his playing.

It is a matter of great puzzlement to me in 2007 that most 'historically-informed' performers have not by now made serious attempts to embody the style and practice of the nineteenth century in any substantial way. Whilst a number of performers and ensembles show interest in elements of style, few if any have achieved even a vague approximation of the style conveyed in many early recordings, or even described in nineteenth-century pedagogic literature. The Orfeo Duo and Eroica Quartet are both therefore relatively exceptional today in their aims. The latter ensemble, for example, has worked with Clive Brown on aspects of nineteenth-century performing practice. Even so, many of their recordings only apply known traits of the nineteenth century on a selective basis. The listening public, used to a *senza vibrato* tone in several decades of Baroque performance, are thus served with a pure tone (as on their Mendelssohn quartet recordings) for some of the time, although vibrato when it does surface is more akin to the modern more powerful ornament than the thin finger-vibrato of Joachim, Auer or Rosé. This said, other aspects of performance are not really in evidence: portamenti are very discreet and do not even approach Joachim's comparatively selective use of the device, whilst rhythmic treatment and tempo rubato do not evoke the volatility and spontaneity of Joachim's approach. The ensemble plays things very much as written and practice few attempts at the agogic accentuation so characteristic not only of Joachim's playing, but of this entire tradition.

This situation might be seen as ironic, and even rather suspicious. 'Historically-informed' performance, when traced back to its origins, has, in general, advanced forwards in time. Direct evidence of the music practiced by the Dolmetsch family is very scarce and, until the sudden proliferation of performing editions, instrumental treatises and aesthetic manuals in the nineteenth century, the empirical basis of 'early music' is necessarily speculative. And yet, nineteenth-century HIP does not always act on the known aesthetic position, and the comparatively direct evidence of early recordings is all too easily downgraded and dismissed as unreliable.

This attitude applies to Joachim's discography. The shortcomings of this resource are obvious and, as already suggested, great care needs to be taken as regards analysis of them. This said, Borchard's dismissal of them in such a brief fashion is perplexing because they still represent a record of his actual playing.

Indeed, Joachim himself seems to have been satisfied by the results. James Creighton quotes a letter from Joachim (presumably to an official of the Gramophone and Typewriter Company) in which high praise is given of the recordings:

'It was my privilege for a number of years to carry out experiments with the phonograph at Werner von Siemens, in the presence of Mr. Hehnholz [sic]. Since then I have retained an interest in such records and am very glad to hear the progress made by your Gramophone. I was very pleased to accede to your request to have a few selections from my violin repertoire registered, and was highly satisfied that by assiduous

attention they came out better on every occasion. I anticipate with pleasure a far reaching diffusion of the results.⁴³

Obviously Joachim had lower expectations of the possibilities of recording than those of our own times, but this passage (which hints at the possibility of the existence of other, earlier sound recordings) shows how seriously Joachim took what for many was a mere curiosity. One might, as a result, suspect that such evidence is conveniently dismissed; the *idea* of Joachim's playing is perhaps less controversial than its reality.

Thus, revisiting Joachim's playing style might not be so hopelessly unattainable if scholar-performers have the will to do it. My present work as an AHRC Research Fellow in the Creative and Performing Arts⁴⁴ provides an opportunity for a whole-hearted attempt to immerse oneself in, and recapture Joachim's aesthetic ideals without the worries and potential distortions of the professional performance 'world', in which even the most zealous HIP performer has to regard to a certain degree the saleability of their playing in the context of modern taste.

Some optimism, indeed, can be voiced as regards the evidence on which to base this attempt at stylistic reconstruction. Whilst Joachim's own output raises a number of doubts concerning its ability to communicate his playing, other sources of information can be brought in to further explain and corroborate what one reads and hears.

Putting Joachim's own outputs into the context of his disciples can provide valuable insights. As one might expect of a figure of Joachim's stature, many musicians found his way of playing inspirational and attempted to capture for themselves some of his stylistic traits. A number of these players made recordings or, in other ways, left evidence of their playing in such a way as to further define our image of Joachim's playing.

Much of the study of the recordings of violinists, thus far, has appraised them in their contemporary setting (in order better to understand changing trends and tastes in performance as documented by them),⁴⁵ or has taken a cautious historical approach, looking at the earliest-born musicians (including Joachim himself, of course) in order to flesh out an understanding of late nineteenth-century style. My first book, *Theory and Practice in Late-Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance*,⁴⁶ assessed the chronological relevance of singers and players to the nineteenth century by means of a simple 'rule of thumb' based on the birth date of the musician. I took 1860 or thereabouts as the latest birth-date of performers to be included in the study, on the premise that those who had reached the age of c.40 by the new century would, in all probability, have cemented their artistic (and therefore stylistic) reputations before the significant shifts in style that coincided with the first third of the twentieth century.

⁴³ Sleeve notes to MB 1019 (Discopedia – *Masters of the Bow*). The comments, presumably addressed to an official of the G and T company, are dated 27th August 1903 (Gmunden, Upper Austria) by Creighton.

⁴⁴ The writer is engaged as a Research Fellow at Leeds University, UK. Details of the project can be found on the School of Music's web pages.

⁴⁵ As in Philip, *Early Recordings*.

⁴⁶ See note 9.

Of course, such a hypothesis is, by definition, crude and creates its own difficulties. By the time electrical recording processes were invented, the youngest of these figures would be 65 years old – an age of greater venerability than now. Some of the oldest on record, such as Santley, Patti, Sarasate or Joachim, might raise reasonable doubts concerning their performance standard on the grounds of old age. Moreover, strict adherence to such a historical criterion might avoid musicians who provide potent evidence but lie just outside the chronological boundary, such as Arnold Rosé (1863-1946) whose recordings of Beethoven with the Rosé Quartet, as well as some of his electrical-process solo recordings, were included in my study on the grounds that they provided fascinating information and interesting comparisons. Nonetheless, my study did not aim to be comprehensive, and since its research and publication other recordings have become much better known and available allowing a more detailed view of nineteenth-century style. In this category come the recordings of Marie Soldat-Roeger (1864-1955), who studied with Joachim, was admired by Brahms and who undertook a detailed examination of the cadenza of the Brahms concerto with Joachim.⁴⁷ A former teacher had been Augustus Pott, who had been a pupil of Spohr. Her recordings are not well known, aside from her performance of the slow movement of Spohr's 9th concerto, which has been re-issued on CD.⁴⁸ Her other recordings, including the first movement of Mozart's A major concerto, Beethoven's Romance in F, and unaccompanied Bach movements were released on LP by James Creighton on his own label in the 1980s⁴⁹ but have received rather less exposure than other players of her generation, in spite of her pedagogic pedigree and the interest this should arouse in scholars of nineteenth-century performance.

Looking at the work of later figures, likely to be stylistically impressionable in the shifting sands of the fin-de-siècle period is, of course, rather dangerous. Most of the violinists who made recordings in any quantity in the first third of the twentieth century were younger than Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), who epitomised a more sensuous approach at variance with Joachim's architectural artistic outlook. This said, there are fascinating glimpses of Joachim's approach in a wider sphere of players and ensembles, certainly in the earliest recordings. The 'dry sound' associated with the nineteenth century (selective, tight vibrati, often prominent and regular portamenti, tempo volatility etc.) can be found in a number of violinists and ensembles who, perhaps, perpetuated the Joachim sound world. Some of these, such as the Brüder-Post or Grete-Eweler Quartets,⁵⁰ are as yet relatively little-known and little-researched and there is, besides, a danger of hearing in them sounds that are simply 'old-fashioned' and thus crudely synonymous perhaps not with Joachim's style, but a more generally unfamiliar sound-world and timbre. Such ensembles may be closer to Joachim than, say, the first recordings of the Bohemian Quartet, but they are not necessarily (and certainly not empirically) comparable with Joachim himself.

⁴⁷ See C. Brown, preface to Brahms Violin Concerto in D major Op. 77 (Barenreiter 'Urtext' score, Kassel, 2006), xii–xiii.

⁴⁸ BVA1 (Pearl), *The Recorded Violin* Volume 1.

⁴⁹ MB 1019.

⁵⁰ Brüder-Post recordings (1921) re-issued on Japanese HMV SGR-8505; Grete-Eweler recordings (1922-4) on Japanese HMV SGR-8508.

Not all recordings by younger players can be dismissed in this way. Some players with direct connections with Joachim did make recordings and perhaps (for a time at least) perpetuated his style. Such players tend to be associated with Berlin, where Joachim lived and worked. Carl Flesch's recollections in his *Memoirs* make significant mention of this point, and often in rather acerbic terms. For example, he reflects that:

'The Joachim clique watched anxiously to ensure...that no alien element should get a hold in the musical circles of Berlin society. In the Mendelssohn house the Joachim cult sometimes took on the nature of idol worship and was extended to people whose only merit was that they had once been taught by the master, more or less successfully.'⁵¹

Flesch thus mentions Capet, for example, for his 'dry style...the Romance conception of German classicism'⁵² and that he was 'hypnotically influenced by the old Joachim.'⁵³ In particular Flesch saw the Klingler Quartet as inheriting Joachim's style and mantle, not always to their credit, in his view. As Flesch writes:

'After Joachim's death he [Klingler] founded his own quartet and soon succeeded in attracting the orphaned Joachim community about him. Klingler no doubt possessed great technical and musical talent which, however, did not fully mature, owing to the peculiarities and shortcomings of his training. His bowing technique was still dominated by the fallacious theory of the lowered upper arm and a 'loose' wrist, not to speak of the unpleasant swells during his portamentos. His interpretative power, on the other hand, was considerable, and he even inherited some of the holy fire of his unforgettable master – though to the detriment of his personality. He stood, as it were, posthumously hypnotised by Joachim...He shaped his music more under the compulsion of a revered tradition than with the independent, personal imagination'.⁵⁴

This quotation is worthy of a little analysis in itself, before examining a few examples of Klingler's style on record. Flesch clearly felt that Klingler's adherence to Joachim's style was artistically unhealthy, and it is curious to note that his homage to Joachim was 'to the detriment of his personality.' For all Flesch's apparent modernity and demand for artistic progressiveness, his very requirement of such a factor places him within a now distant philosophical framework. Few, if any, musicians of merit today would elevate this factor so greatly. Propriety and sensitivity – understanding and playing the music with meaning and sentiment – are perhaps universal axioms, interpreted and applied in widely varying circumstances (from the approaches of the 'mainstream' to those of 'historically-aware' persuasions). The demand for style itself to make strides of progress is a deterministic notion challenged, indeed, by the interest and study of Joachim itself, of which this article is a symptom.

⁵¹ Flesch, 146.

⁵² Flesch, 94.

⁵³ Flesch, 94.

⁵⁴ Flesch, 251.

Such a factor may explain some of Flesch's invective, here, and elsewhere, regarding style and technique associated with Joachim. What Flesch describes as the 'peculiarities and shortcomings' of his technique, and his subsequent description of it is, in fact, the established bow-action found in Spohr's writings, as well as those of the early Paris school, and it even has similarities with that described by Leopold Mozart. Coupled with his criticism of Klingler's portamentos, one can glimpse quite clearly Flesch's (possibly self-protective) spurning of what he considered out-dated playing style and technique. Ironically, this is helpful for us since it suggests that the Klingler Quartet had much in common with Joachim's playing, and given our necessarily limited view (and absence of recordings of the Joachim Quartet itself) this is a valuable and enticing prospect.

The Klingler Quartet recordings corroborate these comments. The sound world of these discs is immediately recognisable in the context of the classical German style, and there are many obvious similarities with Joachim's own playing. In the early acoustic performances of 1911-12 there is a general avoidance of vibrato, and where it does exist it is shallow, tight and certainly in keeping with the device in Joachim or Auer's playing.

In the 'Alla danza tedesca' movement of Beethoven's Op. 130 quartet,⁵⁵ the Klingler quartet's 'dry sound' is accompanied by occasional, slow and pronounced portamenti (a feature Flesch comments upon) as in bar 7 from the C down to the F-sharp in violin 1. The tone is predominantly *senza vibrato*, and the staccato dots (as in bar 27) are on the string. In this place Klingler anticipates the barline, giving the first note of the bar an agogic accent. As often with Joachim, the agogic accent is accompanied by a simultaneous dynamic accent. Perhaps as a reflection of Leopold Mozart's advice to stress the on-beat portion of tied figures,⁵⁶ Klingler 'leans' into the downbeat portion of his elongated first quaver:



Ex. 1

Although this might appear to be a rather minute dissection of a localised moment in this recording, there are many other examples of such rhythmic treatment and indeed, other rhythmic features associated with nineteenth-century performance. In the passage from bar 89, the first violin's decorated semiquaver passage is treated with rhythmic freedom; this freedom, however, exists above a largely 'metronomic' accompaniment, creating a rare instance of obvious tempo dislocation (which was commonplace in piano playing) in string playing in early recordings. In part this occurs as one might expect, where there are widely spaced leaps and string crossings, but technical concerns alone do not explain some of the most startling passages. At bars 105-107 Klingler dwells on the first part of the bar, hurrying the remainder to remain within the bar and align with the accompaniment, as at 113-115 (Ex. 2). At 118-120 the pace of the dislocation changes and becomes a more

⁵⁵ Odeon recording of 1912 (matrix number 79169:xxB 5670), on SGR 8506 (Japanese HMV).

⁵⁶ See for example L. Mozart, *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756R1922, trans. E. Knocker, New York, 1949), 39-40.

general application of tempo flexibility – bars 118-119 push forward, and at 120 the tempo eases back into the theme:

Ex. 2

The c.1923-5 Rosé Quartet recording⁵⁷ makes an interesting comparison. The later, electric recordings of this ensemble⁵⁸ are well known and oft quoted as suggestive of a nineteenth-century style, preserved (comparatively) intact into the era of recordings. The Klingler comparison qualifies this – the quartet sounds more modern and lacks many of the rhythmic features of the Klingler performance. Rosé uses appreciably more vibrato in general, particularly on the dotted crotchets near the start and, although there are some eccentricities (including the curiously-engineered portamento in bar 4 on the repeat, which has little obvious justification in nineteenth-century aesthetic theory and appears rather the product of momentary whimsy), the performance does sound more ‘modern’. The repeated quaver figure as at 27 is rendered much more regularly (and rather without shape) and the passage at 89 is, likewise, comparatively metronomic, although there is a general tendency, as with Klingler, to make the second half of the bar lighter and faster than the start, perhaps in order to define the down beats. The impression of these two recordings, both apparently representative of ‘old-fashioned’ playing, is that Klingler’s performance is one of movement, informality even, whilst Rose’s performance sounds well-drilled and disciplined.

This comparison is reinforced in a later example of the Klingler ensemble, in the Scherzo of Cherubini’s first quartet. More than twenty years later than the

⁵⁷ Re-issued on Arbiter 148 (*Arnold Rosé – First Violin of Vienna*) Cherubini 1st quartet scherzo (matrix no. H 4-8772, 52130), Boccherini Menuetto arranged for quartet (matrix number H 4-8772, 52131), Beethoven Op. 130 ‘alla danza tedesca’ (matrix number H.B.8216,51077), Mozart K465 Menuetto (matrix no. H.B. 8216, 51076).

⁵⁸ Op. 18/4, 74 and 131 quartets, re-issued on Biddulph LAB 056/057 (*Arnold Rosé and the Rosé String Quartet*).

Beethoven, this 1935 recording⁵⁹ is interesting because it shows, in part, how Klingler retained some of the rhythmic features found in his earlier discography, whilst more modern features were also 'imported' and overlaid. There is much more vibrato in this recording, particularly in evidence after the fermatas before the trio, and in the curiously languid reading of the final reprise of this section. This illuminates the difficulties inherent in examining the style of younger players. Klingler, of Kreisler's generation,⁶⁰ may well have retained Joachim in his memory and sought to perpetuate his style of playing, but the quartet could not, in all probability, perpetuate the sound-world of a period that would have been considered aesthetically outmoded. This might also explain the Rosé Quartet's regular, if very slight vibrato, although one might also note that Rosé's early solo recordings contain very much more of it than even the later electric-process quartet recordings; this rather suggests that Rosé's quartet playing was comparatively puritanical and that he reserved the most use of the vibrato 'ornament' for solo playing.⁶¹

This Klingler performance is curiously eccentric. Cherubini's metronome mark of crotchet = 126 is conspicuously contradicted by the ensemble, which begins at about 84, accelerating after the first few bars to c.100. Frequently the three-quaver figure of the opening is treated to accents on the first and third of the group, giving it an oddly grotesque effect. In spite of the superior frequency and dynamic range of an electric recording, relatively little difference between forte and piano can be heard, as in bars 9-10, in which Cherubini's detailed and specific marking is curtailed in favour of a more generic bringing-out of high notes and strong beats. Nonetheless, rhythmic volatility and more specific instances of agogic accentuation remain, as in the Beethoven performance. Thus, at bars 13-14 the paired semiquavers are held and the remainder of the figure played lighter and faster; this unequal effect is a well-documented feature of Joachim's playing and discernible in his recordings. Aside from more general (already observed) tempo flexibility (which also includes a slow start to the Trio and slight accelerando to crotchet = 112, perhaps in parallel to the same feature at the very start of the movement), Klingler can use very obvious agogic accents, as at bars 58-59 which, in the slow and rather flaccid final reading, involves a substantial rhythmic change of a kind that had become very rare by the mid-1930s:

The image shows a musical score for three staves: Violin I, Violin II, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in 3/4 time and features a three-quaver figure. The first two staves have the instruction 'ramenez le 1er mouvement' written below them. The score includes various rhythmic markings and accents, particularly on the first and third notes of the three-quaver groups.

Ex. 3

⁵⁹ Electrola matrix nos: EH 939-943, 2RA 810-3, 811-1, 812-1, 813-1, 814-2, 815-2, 816-1, 817-1m, 818-1, 819-1; re-issued on SGR-8506 (Japanese HMV).

⁶⁰ Karl Klingler (1879-1971), Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962).

⁶¹ A comparison of his solo playing of c.1909-10 (re-issued on Arbiter 148) and his electric quartet recordings of 1927-8 (re-issued on LAB 056/057) is quite revealing. .

The Rosé Quartet also recorded this Cherubini in the mid-1920s.⁶² They begin at a faster crotchet = 112, which is still substantially at variance with the composer's marking, and accelerate in the first few bars in the same manner as the Klinger Quartet. As in the Beethoven performance, there are a few stylistic mannerisms that would be of dubious taste to Joachim, such as Rosé's slight 'swoop' up to the G in bar 7, and descending portamento on the two quavers of the following bar – features that, unlike Joachim's playing and the theoretical stance of most German school commentators, do not arise naturally out of the music but are oddly 'tacked on'. Rosé also tends to stress the second, not first note of a slurred pair (as at bar 6). This said there is much in common with Klingler's playing. The semiquavers at 13-14, for example are also played unequally and in a similar way. Rosé treats the Trio as a virtuoso exercise, setting off at a 'moto perpetuo' tempo of crotchet = 132, and with a bright, off-string timbre. Accordingly the figure at the opening of the second half of the Trio (Ex. 4) has the semiquavers very short and late, further enhancing the bravura effect and indeed, a sense of discipline and technical élan:



Ex. 4

The comparison of these two examples is revealing. It shows, perhaps, that the Rosé quartet, although superficially similar to the classical German style, has a rather different motivation in which technical aspects (albeit within the aesthetic ideals of the late nineteenth century) are of primary concern.⁶³ Klingler's ensemble seems to place such matters rather lower down the list of priorities and, notwithstanding the 'modernisation' evident in their playing, some aspects of it retains a link to earlier practices. It is tempting to see their use of tempo rubato, agogic accentuation and tempo dislocation as part of their Joachim heritage. Certainly, if so, this would corroborate the comments of Fuller Maitland, who clearly considered such plasticity of rhythm and tempo as the defining excellence of Joachim's quartet playing.

Indeed, there are further fascinating glimpses of such matters. For example, the opening bars of the finale of Beethoven's Op. 127 quartet involves a rich variety of rhythmic changes and tempo manipulations that must have seemed eccentric indeed in 1935:

⁶² Re-issued on *Arbiter* 148; see note 55.

⁶³ That is to say, aesthetic decisions are comparatively arbitrary and seem to reflect a greater emphasis on showmanship than musicianship.

MILSOM: String Chamber Music of the Classical German School, 1840-1900:
A Scholarly Investigation through Reconstructive Performance

Finale

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is Violin I, the second is Violin II, the third is Viola, and the bottom is Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score begins with a forte (f) dynamic and a sforzato (sf) chord. It features various phrasing slurs, including a large one spanning the first six bars, and smaller ones for individual notes or groups. Dynamic markings include f, sf, p, and sul G. Performance instructions like [simile] and [^-] are present. The score is divided into three systems, each with a repeat sign at the beginning.

Ex. 5

Klingler begins in a declamatory style, arpeggiating the octave opening chord, treating the lower note as a grace-note before the beat, an effect that relaxes the verticality of the rhythm at the start and throws extra weight upon the initial downbeat. The effect is repeated in a more subtle way by means of a slight 'spreading' of the sforzato chord on the third beat, in which the second violin slightly anticipates the first. Given that the two violins are an octave apart here, this might be said to reflect the style of the opening chord. The subsequent crotchets are very slightly hurried after a (fractionally) sustained sforzato minim. In bars 5 and 6 Klingler minutely elongates the first quaver of each bar (slightly more in 6 than 5) and the other quavers are played a little faster and lighter to compensate. The minims in these bars are held for their full value and slightly stressed, but then Klingler lengthens the A-natural in bar 7 very obviously, preceded by a slow and accental portamento. The passage of slurred crotchets afterwards rushes with corresponding urgency in order to compensate for the time lost, a feature repeated in bars 13-20. There is then a sizeable caesura before the next theme starts.

To what extent, twenty-eight years after Joachim's death, might this bear *any* relationship with the practice of the Joachim Quartet? Empirically, of course this is

an unanswerable question. It seems highly unlikely that these performing practices remained unchanged, when so many other aspects of playing had, by then, been so fundamentally transformed. This having been said, the detailed manipulation of tempo, the subtle handling of agogic accentuation, and the compensation-rubato that results in corresponding accelerandi after ritardandi – these are all features known to have been notable habits of Joachim’s playing, and it is at least plausible to assert that the Klingler Quartet here are trying to perpetuate an observed performance tradition. This might also explain the curiously ‘staged’ effect of the above passage, as if the style had become in some respects petrified with age and temporal distance. This is a long way from Joachim’s legendary spontaneity, and in fact might be seen to be the opposite of his ethos. Nonetheless, it might help provide the modern player with more information with which to understand Joachim’s style.

The solo recordings of Marie Soldat-Roeger,⁶⁴ another Joachim pupil, corroborate many of the features of the Klingler recordings whilst proving (perhaps unsurprisingly) a more direct comparison in other respects. Although James Creighton criticises her for the ‘rather academic’ repertoire in her recordings,⁶⁵ it is a tremendous gift to the scholar that it is so, since there are many examples of direct relevance to Joachim’s own practice and it is easily conceivable that she would have worked on this repertoire with him.

Her performance of the first movement of Mozart’s 5th concerto⁶⁶ is notable for her use of agogic accents and a manner of tempo flexibility that seems entirely consistent with Joachim’s own practice.

The Adagio inhabits a sonority similar to Joachim’s, although it should be noted that Soldat does not perform the same fingerings as in Joachim’s edition, and she uses a little more vibrato. It seems probable that the amount of vibrato reflects the later date of this recording (c.1926), at which time all players, to a greater or lesser extent, had liberalised their use of the device. Nonetheless, the character of the vibrato is discreet and superficial and, coupled to the evident but tasteful portamenti, Joachim’s approach is still discernible.

In the following Allegro aperto section (bar 46) one finds a fascinating variety of rhythmic manipulations, entirely congruent with accounts of Joachim’s playing and aesthetic postulation of the nineteenth century. The dotted rhythm at the opening is rather over-dotted (and the falling quaver figure at bar 55 is performed as a dotted rhythm, unlike the notation), whilst important notes are highlighted by agogic accents, such as the high A in bar 48, or the E in 49. In the semiquaver passage, comparable to passages in the Cherubini quartet described above, the paired slurred notes are dwelt upon, and the following notes rushed to a very obvious and noteworthy degree.

⁶⁴ MB 1019.

⁶⁵ Sleeve notes to MB 1019.

⁶⁶ Union A 3006/8, in MB 1019. See annotated scores attached here.

The image displays a musical score for a string instrument, likely a violin or viola, in G major. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *(f)* and features a series of notes with slurs and fingerings (0, 3, 3, 2). The second staff contains a complex passage with slurs, trills, and fingerings (2, 0, 1, 4). The third staff continues with slurs and fingerings (1, 1, 1, 1). The fourth staff shows a series of slurs and fingerings (3, 3, 3). The fifth staff concludes with a trill and a final note. The score is annotated with various performance instructions and technical markings.

Ex. 6

When this passage recurs at bar 144, Soldat's interpretation becomes more impetuous. The unequal treatment of the semiquaver passage now includes marked *accelerandi* (147-8, for example) and (James Creighton's remarks notwithstanding) this performance seems to capture some of the fiery excitement known to have characterised Joachim's playing. Her cadenza continues this trait; it is, in fact, remarkable how closely this resembles Joachim's playing. There is only one obvious vibrato example that Joachim might not have effected, on the chord in the 5th quaver of bar 8 in the cadenza. Otherwise, the tone is, if anything, purer here than in the main body of the movement. Soldat follows Joachim's fingerings (in this, his own cadenza) quite faithfully, exploring their possibilities for portamenti, whilst chords are spread quickly and cleanly, in a manner very similar to Joachim's in his G minor Prelude performance, for example. Her non-vibrato tone retains a warmth and richness, suggesting a firm bow-stroke in the upper half of the bow, characteristic of nineteenth-century technique.

Such traits are perpetuated in her Bach Partita no. 3 (Largo) performance,⁶⁷ which also makes for an interesting comparison with Joachim's own unaccompanied Bach. Indeed, if one listens to Joachim's G minor Prelude and then this recording in quick succession the similarities are startling. Soldat uses a little finger-vibrato on some of the longer notes, but then so does Joachim (and it is all too easy to simplify Joachim's approach to the device by claiming, inaccurately, that Joachim uses no vibrato in this Bach performance). In comparison to David's edition of the work,

⁶⁷ Union A 3004, in MB 1019.

Soldat changes a few of the fingerings, often to invite discreet but regular portamenti, and across wider intervals, as in bar 8 in which consecutive 4th fingers are implied by her playing – a fingering system entirely in agreement with those of the nineteenth-century German school. As with Joachim, tempo is quite freely treated, time being taken in particular at the points in the texture where there are portamenti over larger intervals, all of which gives the movement a lyrical and reflective character. Chords are spread quickly and accented, in a manner not unlike Joachim's (although his rich and organ-like tone in these passages is not so well conveyed in Soldat's recording).

Soldat's other recordings corroborate these aspects. Economy of scope in this particular article precluded further examples here, although mention must be made of what is at present her most famous recording – that of the slow movement of Spohr's 9th concerto, in which (after the teaching of Augustus Pott, a Spohr pupil) she adheres remarkably closely to Spohr's fingerings and vibrati as indicated in the edition of the work published as part of his *Violinschule*.⁶⁸

* * *

Re-appraising the performing practices of the oldest violinist on record necessitates looking beyond these brief and insubstantial sound fragments. If Joachim's recordings are placed in the context of his other writings, contemporary comment and indeed the actions of his protégés and admirers, they can indeed convey much about his playing.

Do we, then, know enough about his playing to reconstruct it? Do we have enough evidence, a century after his death, to recreate a Joachim 'sound-world'? Certainly, almost all of the sources discussed in this essay have their limitations and need careful handling. From a purely empirical standpoint, stylistic 'recreation' is an imprecise concept anyway. Does it entail copying how Joachim played, and if so how can one ever know with certainty that this is accurate? Does it (perhaps more pragmatically) involve learning his performance language: playing, as it were, in the manner of a pupil? This seems much more realistic, but harder perhaps to quantify.

The extent to which, a century after his death, musicians are able to recreate something of Joachim's approach will always be debatable, but cannot be dismissed out of hand. Careful and intelligent understanding of Joachim's outputs in context can help us better to understand their significance and validity, and, although Joachim's own output is less than we would wish it to be, it has more foundation when placed in its immediate context. Joachim's stature as a player was a paradox – he was a conscious embodiment of established tradition: something that, in his eyes perhaps, gave his playing greater authority – yet at the same time he prized spontaneity and flexibility as key criteria of art. For Joachim more than most others it seems likely that his playing varied widely from one day to the next, which rather qualifies the wider significance of his recordings, explains the sketchiness of his editions, and makes the relevance of the performances of even his closest disciples of dubious empirical validity.

⁶⁸ L. Spohr *Violinschule* (Vienna, 1832, Eng trans C. Rudolphus, 1833), 212-6.

**MILSOM: String Chamber Music of the Classical German School, 1840-1900:
A Scholarly Investigation through Reconstructive Performance**

Joachim's stylistic attitude – the principles of style which he espoused, the mannerisms he opposed, and the artistic and philosophical outlook he embodied – can be reawakened a century after his death. Given his advocacy of a pure and elevated artistic outlook and his personal connections to a vast swathe of nineteenth-century repertoire, the relevance of this attempt to revive Joachim's style of playing is not in doubt. As the canon of repertoire slips ever further into the past, conscious attempts to unite such compositions with their contemporary performing practices hold ever-increasing importance as part of our efforts to perform historical music in ways that respect a composer's ethos. Although inevitably imperfect, attempts better to understand and practice Joachim's playing have never had such cultural urgency.